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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PORT LOUIS 000329

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AF/E FOR MARIA BEYZEROV

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [MARR](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [UK](#) [MP](#)
SUBJECT: PRIME MINISTER DISCUSSES UN VOTING AND DIEGO
GARCIA WITH USG

REF: A. PORT LOUIS 64
[B](#). PORT LOUIS 85
[C](#). PORT LOUIS 189

Classified By: Ambassador Cesar B. Cabrera for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#). (C) SUMMARY: In a September 18 meeting between Ambassador Cesar Cabrera and Prime Minister Ramgoolam (with POLOFF as note taker), Ramgoolam noted that to better reflect the true relationship between the U.S. and Mauritius he would like to increase UN voting coincidence between the two countries, and that he would personally review Mauritian voting practices in the UN. Although acknowledging that USG refers all questions on Diego Garcia to HMG, Ramgoolam noted that he would like to "resolve the issue of Diego Garcia by signing a bilateral agreement." Ramgoolam said that he would be personally involved in both efforts as someone who understands the "geopolitical" concerns of the USG and the importance of the "friendship" between the U.S. and Mauritius. END SUMMARY.

[2](#). (C) The September 18 quarterly meeting between Ambassador Cesar Cabrera and Prime Minister Ramgoolam started with the Prime Minister detailing his shock at the low UN voting coincidence between the U.S. and Mauritius. After the previous June 2 meeting between Ambassador Cabrera and PM Ramgoolam, when the Ambassador gave Ramgoolam a detailed vote-by-vote spreadsheet on how Mauritius' and USG's votes coincided in the 62nd UNGA assembly, Ramgoolam expressed his "annoyance" at his Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and the former Minister of Foreign Affairs, whom he removed on March 17, for not alerting him of this "surprising pattern." Referring to the eight percent voting coincidence in 2007 between the two countries, Ramgoolam said that he "understands disagreements between friends... but not so many." In light of the upcoming UNGA season, Ramgoolam encouraged the Ambassador to "make him aware of every vote and not just rely on the MFA," and added that he would personally encourage an increase in voting coincidence with the U.S.

[3](#). (C) Using the "friendship" between the U.S. and Mauritius as a springboard, Ramgoolam segued into the issue of Diego Garcia. He began this portion of the conversation by referring to his conversations with UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown, whom he says expresses that HMG wants to assist on the sovereignty issue but cannot because of the "Americans." Ramgoolam preempted the Ambassador by saying that he understands the official lines of both parties and respects the "geopolitics of the game," but that all Mauritius asks for is sovereignty of the Chagos Archipelago. He further noted that he wants the U.S. to keep the military base of Diego Garcia and is willing to sign an agreement with either the U.S. or the U.K., although he said he felt that Brown

preferred the agreement be signed directly with the U.S.

14. (C) Despite his knowledge that USG considers all Diego Garcia issues as sovereign issues between the U.K. and Mauritius, Ramgoolam kept citing his understanding and willingness to work with USG. He first cited his 1995 reversal of the 1982 ruling of the Mouvement Militant Mauricien (MMM) that no US ships would be allowed in port unless nuclear weapons were declared. He said his reasoning for reversing this rule was his understanding of geopolitics and the interests of his nation. He further noted that at the time, he realized that US ships had to come or they would all go to Seychelles anyway, "which is close enough for any nuclear fallout to hit Mauritius,...so, why take the risk without the reward possibility," he said. For his second example, Ramgoolam drew parallels between him and his father by citing the political context coloring his father Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam's, Mauritius' first president, decision to cede the Chagos territory to gain their independence. Ramgoolam suggested that his father saw the geopolitical importance of not only independence, but of having like-minded allies in a time and a region where Russia funded coups that destroyed democratic governments. Ramgoolam concluded this anecdote by saying that "...like my father understood, I understand." The Ambassador made no comment or commitment regarding the PM's assertions regarding Diego Garcia. Instead, he merely reminded the PM that indeed any sovereignty issues should be taken to the HMG, not the USG.

15. (C) COMMENT: Post doubts that Madan Dulloo was sacked due to the UN voting record, but rather due to political

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infighting. Regardless of the reasons, it seems clear that Ramgoolam has had little respect for the MFA before and after the Dulloo dismissal. This is one reason Post is so pleased at the nomination of Arvin Boolell as the new Foreign Minister. The Embassy has had a good working relationship with Boolell in his previous position as the Agro-Industry Minister, so we are cautiously optimistic about his new role as Foreign Minister being a positive development. With regard to the UN voting, Post optimism is tempered by Mauritius' tendency to bloc vote with regional or ideological groups and Boolell's unfamiliarity with the broad issues dealt with at UNGA outside of agriculture. With regard to the PM's proposal on Diego Garcia, Post has no plans to follow-up or comment on the issue with GOM. Department leadership, however, should be prepared to receive similar talking points when they meet with GOM officials in coming months. END COMMENT.
CABRERA